

REMARKS

Initially, applicant would like to thank Examiner Isabella for granting an interview and for his time spent during the interview.

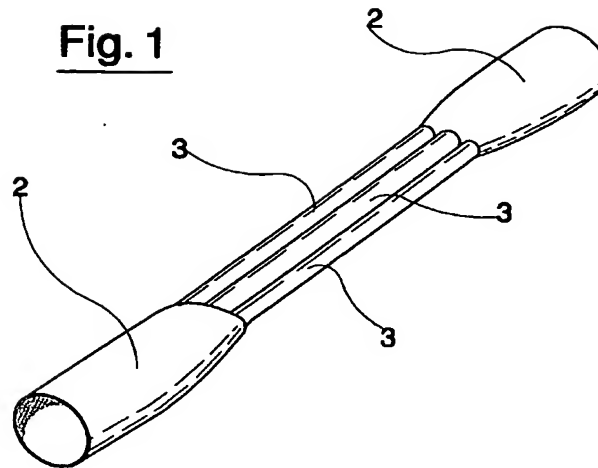
The application has been amended consistent with the discussion at the interview to place the application in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

Claims 1-8 were previously pending in the application. Claims 5 and 8 are cancelled, leaving claims 1-4, 6 and 7 for consideration.

Claims 1-5 and 8 were rejected as anticipated by THOMPSON et al. 5,906,641. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is amended as suggested in the interview to clarify that the smaller conduits rejoin with the main conduit. Claim 1 is further amended to include the subject matter of claim 5 and recites that the smaller conduits are at least three in number.

As demonstrated at the interview and as seen by way of example in Figure 1 of the present application, reproduced below, the main conduit 2 is subdivided into three smaller conduits 3, which then rejoin with the main conduit 2.



As pointed out at the interview, the embodiment of Figures 18 and 19 of THOMPSON (as is each of the embodiments of THOMPSON) is directed to a stent graft, which is designed for insertion into the interior of a vessel (see figure 14 and column 4, lines 54-58), while the device of the present invention is designed to be sutured or otherwise connected to the outer portion of the vessel.

In any event, as set forth at the interview, the above embodiment of THOMPSON has a single proximal conduit and three distal conduits. THOMPSON does not disclose that the three distal conduits rejoin as a single conduit at the distal end. Thus, THOMPSON does not disclose at least three smaller conduits located parallel one to another, that rejoin with said main conduit after being subdivided.

As this reference does not disclose that which is recited, the anticipation rejection is not viable.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Adding the subject matter of claim 5 into claim 1 is believed to obviate the anticipation rejection over QUIJANO et al. 6,110,201.

Claim 5 was rejected as unpatentable over QUIJANO et al. in view of THOMPSON et al. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

As pointed out at the interview, the two types of devices in the references are so disparate, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have considered the combination in the first instance. QUIJANO is directed to splicing two smaller valved conduits together to replace one larger valved conduit, while THOMPSON is a stent, which is placed inside a vessel, does not include a valve and is used to allow fluid flow while an artery is being treated.

In any event, as set forth above, the three smaller conduit embodiment of THOMPSON does not rejoin with a main conduit after being subdivided. QUIJANO does not disclose at least three smaller conduits located parallel one to another, that rejoin with the main conduit after being subdivided.

The above noted feature is missing from each of the references is absent from the combination and thus would not have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art.

Claim 6 was rejected as unpatentable over QUIJANO in view of THOMPSON and further in view of NUNEZ et al. 5,800,514. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

NUNEZ does not disclose at least three smaller conduits located parallel one to another, that rejoin with the main conduit after being subdivided as recited in claim 1. As set forth above, neither QUIJANO nor THOMPSON disclose what is recited in claim 1. Since claim 6 depends from claim 1, claim 6 is believed patentable at least for depending from an allowable independent claim.

Claim 6 was rejected as unpatentable over THOMPSON in view of NUNEZ. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

NUNEZ does not disclose what is recited in claim 1. As set forth above, THOMPSON does not disclose what is recited in claim 1. Since claim 6 depends from claim 1, claim 6 is believed patentable at least for depending from an allowable independent claim.

Claim 7 was rejected as unpatentable over QUIJANO and THOMPSON and NUNEZ and further in view of GREENHALGH U.S. Patent Application 2002/0058992. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

GREENHALGH is only cited for the disclosure of a biocompatible material. GREENHALGH does not disclose or suggest what is recited in claim 1. As set forth above, the combination of QUIJANO, THOMPSON and NUNEZ does not teach what is recited in

claim 1. Since claim 7 depends from claim 1 and further defines the invention, the proposed combination of references would not have rendered obvious claim 7.

Claim 7 was rejected as unpatentable over THOMPSON and NUNEZ and further in view of GREENHALGH. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

GREENHALGH is only cited for the disclosure of a biocompatible material. GREENHALGH does not disclose or suggest what is recited in claim 1. As set forth above, the combination of THOMPSON and NUNEZ does not teach what is recited in claim 1. Since claim 7 depends from claim 1 and further defines the invention, the proposed combination of references would not have rendered obvious claim 7.

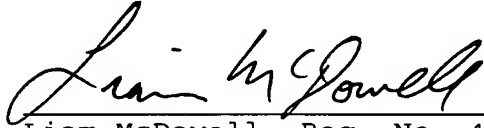
In view of the present amendment and foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional
fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Liam McDowell", written over a horizontal line.

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